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STATE FOR S/GWI

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM PREL KPAO KWNM RP

SUBJECT: S/GWI PROJECT PROPOSALS - PHILIPPINES

REF: 09 STATE 132094

¶1. Embassy Manila submits two proposals for consideration for the 2010 Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues Small Grants Initiative. The first is a \$50,000 project to fund the expansion of a women's support center in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The second is a \$100,000 project to train and sensitize attorneys and local legislators to advocate for and defend the rights of women at the grassroots level. If S/GWI selects either of these local organizations as a grantee, the grant will be managed by the Human Rights Officer in the Political Section, acting as a Grants Officer Representative, and a Grants Officer in the Public Affairs Section. The point of contact for these submissions is Political Officer Doreen Bailey, baileydp@state.gov.

PROJECT ONE: EXPAND A WOMEN'S SUPPORT CENTER

ORGANIZATION: Bansag Babai

PROJECT TITLE: Construction and Expansion of Existing Women Support Group Center in Kasalamatan Village, Jolo, Sulu

¶13. POST NOTE: This project will fund the expansion of a women's center in Jolo, a strategically important city in the conflict-affected island of Sulu in Mindanao. The Sulu Archipelago, and Sulu island in particular, have suffered from economic stagnation and neglect brought on by weak governance, a decades-long separatist insurgency, and terrorist threats ranging from the homegrown Abu Sayyaf Group and Rajah Solaiman Movement to the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah. The USG's interagency approach to the challenges in this region includes programs that address the poverty, corruption, and underdevelopment that can give rise to terrorism. The committee selected this project because it supports the Mission Strategic Plan goal of defeating terrorists and fostering peace through its efforts to improve access to social services for the women of Sulu. The committee also appreciated the fact that our funding would allow the Center to significantly expand its services to reach a broader community. Bansag Babai is well-known to the U.S. military forces temporarily deployed in Jolo, and has worked with the Philippine and U.S. militaries on joint social service projects in the past. END NOTE

¶14. PROBLEM STATEMENT: According to the Philippine National Police (PNP), between 2007 and 2009 there were 30 instances of violent acts against women (rapes, abduction, physical abuse, etc) in Sulu Province, but due to social taboo against reporting such acts, the actual number is likely much higher. There is currently no organization in Sulu that provides support for women victims of abuse and violence. Bansag Babai Inc. has recently inaugurated a center that is aimed at providing a shelter to female victims of violence. The center would also be a place to further the education of women in Sulu through educational programs in livelihood and leadership training. The center is sustained through private

donations, but Bansang Babai is looking to expand their facility and resources to better serve the women of Sulu.

15. PROPOSED PROJECT SUMMARY: The center currently consists of one small two-room building. The proposed project would triple the size of the existing structure to include a total of three classrooms to be used as a conference room for counseling, training and meetings, one room to serve as a health clinic, and one room with restroom facilities to be used as a temporary living space for victims of violence. Funding for this project would also provide furniture and materials such as chairs, desks, computers, books, beds, and cabinets to fill the expanded center. Lastly, the project will provide equipment, such as food processing equipment, sewing machines and other educational materials to further the center's capacity to conduct livelihood and skills training.

16. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed project would:

- Expand the current building from 600 sq. ft. to 1,800 sq. ft.
- Furnish the expanded building
- Provide educational materials and equipment

The expansion would allow the center to expand the services the center currently provides, including:

-- Assistance for abused women & children, to include counseling and guest lecturers on women's empowerment;

-- Vocational classes;

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-- Doctor's visits, including lectures on general health care, reproductive health, pre/post natal care, immunization, preventive medicine and water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) advocacy;

-- Victim support--temporary shelter, counseling, health assessment in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Rural Health Units and Philippine National Police (PNP) Women's Desk.

-- Skills training (food processing, sewing, computer literacy, solid waste management and recycling)

-- Education (WASH, basic literacy, women's issues, reproductive health, values formation activities, leadership training)

Desired Outcome:

-- Serve as the main healing center for women and children victims of violence for the Province of Sulu.

-- Capable of supporting at least five victims at any one time with temporary shelter.

-- Serve at least 150 women in the center in the first year of operation.

-- Hold regular educational symposiums in all municipalities.

-- Engage and train an active community of local women leaders who can continue to provide services to the province.

-- Develop the mechanism with the line agencies (DSWD, PNP, RHU, LGU) to better serve and support victims of violence as well as maintain better records of violence.

19. PROJECT BUDGET:

Construction Materials: \$25,000

Furnishing: \$10,000

Computers: \$5,000

Educational materials: \$10,000
TOTAL: \$50,000

¶10. DESCRIPTION OF THE RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION: BANSAG BABAI is one of the active Women Organizations in the town of Jolo, and is actively involved and engaged with other foreign donor-assisted projects in Sulu, such as the Philippine-Canada Local Governance Support Program in ARMM for two projects -- as CSO Coach for the Building Constituency in Participatory Governance and as Managing CSO Partner for the WASH Service Delivery component. The organization has recently worked in partnership with a Philippine) Australian community-assisted project with small grants for facilities and livelihood programs for women. They are also a partner of the Armed Violence Reduction Initiative to promote peaceful communities. Currently, Bansag Babai has 40 members, the majority of whom are professionals involved in strategic development programs and advocacies. Bansag Babai has also organized a network of chapters in different municipalities in Sulu. One of its major programs is the newly established Women Support Group Center, which started its operation in November 2009 with active involvement of other stakeholders such as DSWD, the PNP Women,s Desk, and the Provincial Board Member-Women Representative.

PROJECT TWO: CREATING EFFECTIVE ADVOCATES

ORGANIZATION: Women's Legal Education, Advocacy and Defense

(Womenlead) Foundation

PROJECT TITLE: Capacitating Lawyers and Local Legislators and Building Alliances to Improve Access to Justice for the Survivors of Violence Against Women

¶11. POST NOTE: The Philippines has legislated many laws for the protection of women, but implementation of these laws at the national and local levels is hindered by the lack of awareness and knowledge of these laws. Through training and network building, this project seeks to strengthen lawyers, and local legislators' ability to advocate for and defend the rights of women at the grassroots level. The project supports the Mission Strategic Plan goal of transforming governance and protecting human rights through engaging government and civil society to promote good governance, effective rule of law, and respect for human rights. Post appreciates the positive public diplomacy opportunity presented by this project, as the project would culminate in

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a three-day national conference with 200 stakeholders, including judges, justices, prosecutors, community and NGO paralegals, police, legal advocates, among others. END NOTE

12 PROBLEM DESCRIPTION: The Philippines has a robust legal framework for addressing violence against women (VAW), with laws considered to be models in the region which conform to international VAW standards. Yet, the actual impact of these laws on individual women's lives and knowledge of these legal protections remains limited. Specifically, in the area of access to justice, barriers continue to impede women and girl survivors of VAW to access justice through the legal process.

These barriers include the lack of access to legal services, which is due in turn to the dearth of knowledgeable legal service providers. When services do exist, women are still confronted with a lack of sensitivity on the part of lawyers, paralegals, and other service providers who purport to represent them and assist them in their legal struggles, thereby further disempowering these women. The lack of a gender-sensitive lens through which the provisions of the law are interpreted by prosecutors and judges, in turn, works to nullify the intent of these the legal framework against VAW and creates impunity for those who commit VAW. The lack of support mechanisms and services meant to facilitate the recovery and reintegration of VAW survivors within the

community also aggravate women,s difficulty in accessing justice. This project seeks to address these disabling conditions and increase women,s access to justice.

¶13. PROJECT SUMMARY: Womenlead envisions an effective legal system through which VAW survivors can access justice under the national VAW laws. Improving women's and girls' access to justice is essential in attaining substantive equality for women, so that these laws will actually impact women's lives and become a true instrument of healing and justice for them. Making the law meaningful in addressing survivors, actual experiences and needs will encourage their greater use of it, and in turn, greater respect for the laws and legal process, by offenders and other stakeholders in the legal process. It seeks to create the enabling conditions within the community so that women can effectively seek redress for violation of their rights and reintegration into society. It is expected that at the end of the 18-month project local women legislators and lawyers will have the capacity to analyze women,s issues from a gender perspective; to advocate within the local legislature and the courts via legal and judicial reforms, respectively, to realize women,s human rights; and to render gender-sensitive legal services and decisions for VAW survivors. It is also expected that they, together with other stakeholders in the justice system, will build alliances for a more effective response to VAW cases.

¶14. PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The overall objective of this project is to contribute to the creation of enabling conditions in the community for improved access to justice of survivors of violence against women. It will conduct capacity-building and alliance building among key stakeholders in the justice system in order to make these target beneficiaries become more gender-sensitive advocates and legal service providers for VAW survivors.

The project will accomplish the following:

¶1. Capacity-building of and alliance-building among women local legislators for the creation of enabling conditions for women,s empowerment at the local government level

Thirty female local legislators from all over the Philippines will undergo a five-day capacity-building course to train them on the women,s human rights framework in the Philippines and enable them to analyze local problems from a gender perspective, and to enact local ordinances and measures to carry out the policies and intents of existing anti-VAW national legislation.

¶2. Capacity-building of and alliance building among lawyers to enable them to render gender-sensitive legal services for women and become proactive legal advocates for women,s human rights.

Thirty lawyers from all over the Philippines will undergo a five-day capacity-building course to train them in the women,s human rights framework of legal advocacy; to analyze the law and jurisprudence and its manner of implementation using a gendered perspective; and to gain practical principles and guidelines in providing legal services that will be empowering to VAW survivors.

¶3. Sharing of knowledge and building alliances among the stakeholders in the justice system towards a more gender sensitive legal service delivery and legal advocacy and

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decision-making for VAW survivors.

Two hundred participants, consisting of local legislators and lawyers who participated in the training under this project, together with Womenlead,s partners under other projects (i.e., community and NGO paralegals) and networks of judges, justices, prosecutors, police and other legal advocates, participate and share knowledge in the country's first

three-day conference to enhance their knowledge and skills in rendering gender sensitive legal services and decisions in VAW cases.

This proposed project complements and expands on Womenlead's existing projects and builds on Womenlead's decade of experience in providing legal services for VAW survivors, and its provision of legal education and capacity-building seminars for various audiences. The organization has no current U.S.-funded projects.

¶15. PROJECT BUDGET: The total budget of the project is \$117,067; of that, Womanlead is requesting \$100,000 from S/GWI and will secure the additional \$17,067 from local partners. Post has reviewed the detailed budget submitted in the grant proposal, and will send it to S/GWI upon request.

¶16. DESCRIPTION OF THE RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION: Women,s Legal Education, Advocacy, and Defense (WOMENLEAD) Foundation, Inc., is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in June 2000. It exists to provide legal services and engage in public education and advocacy for the promotion of the human rights and sexual and reproductive empowerment of Filipino women and girls. Womenlead's organizational goals are to: (1) Create a policy environment conducive to advocacy for changes in the legal system towards addressing the needs of women and girls; (2) Raise the consciousness of the general public on women,s and girls' human rights and sexual reproductive rights; (3) Build the capacity of stakeholders for the empowerment of women and girl-children; (4) Provide strategic legal intervention that is affordable, appropriate, empowering and responsive to the needs of women and girls; and (5) Develop strong partnerships with various stakeholders towards a more effective advocacy and service delivery. Womenlead has rendered legal services to over 500 women and girl survivors of VAW; provided legal education for a wide array of audiences (e.g., justices, police, community officials, community women, students, NGO workers); participated in public and legislative advocacy for the passage of pro-women laws including the VAW laws under this proposal; created several publications and conducted research on various on women,s issues. Womenlead's Director, Claire Luczon, is an alumnus of the International Visitor,s Leadership Program of the U.S. Department of State, under the "Role of NGOs in Promoting Women,s Global Issues" program. The organization has two full-time staff members and a cadre of volunteers.

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